



BOOKS &
BIBLE STORIES

TO INSPIRE CHARACTER

BOOKS



Tweens: 9-12

Depending on reading level, some of these will be best as read-aloud books until kids are ready to read them on their own.

Elijah of Buxton - Christopher Paul Curtis
Little Women - Louisa May Alcott
Bud, Not Buddy - Christopher Paul Curtis
Red Sails to Capri - Ann Weil
The Tale of Despereaux - Kate DiCamillo
Wonder - R.J. Palacio
The Trumpet of the Swan - E.B. White
Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry - Mildred D. Taylor
Where the Red Fern Grows - Wilson Rawls
Chronicles of Narnia (series) - C.S. Lewis
Cabin on Trouble Creek - Jean Van Leeuwen
Carry on, Mr. Bowditch - Jean Lee Latham
The Cricket in Times Square - George Selden
Mighty Jack - Ben Hate
Sub-Marine - (my son, Josiah Swanson)
Hatchett - Gary Paulsen

BIOGRAPHIES

Soul Surfer - Bethany Hamilton
Heroes Then and Now - Janet and Geoff Benge (Missionary stories, a series.*Two favorites from the series: George Muller: the Guardian of Bristol's Orphans and Gladys Alward)
Heroes of History Series - Janet and Geoff Benge (George Washington Carver is one of our favorites.)
Helen Keller - Margaret Davidson

Teenagers: 13-18

Ben Hur - Lew Wallace

The Hobbit - J.R.R. Tolkien

The Lord of the Rings series - J.R.R. Tolkien

My Side of the Mountain - Jean Craighead George

Okay for Now - Gary D. Schmidt

The Screwtape Letters - C.S. Lewis

Uncle Tom's Cabin - Harriet Beecher Stowe

The Wednesday Wars - Gary D. Schmidt

The Space Trilogy - C.S. Lewis

Unbroken - Lauren Hillenbrand

The Brothers Karamazov - Fyodor Dostoevsky

BIOGRAPHIES

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin - Benjamin Franklin

Boys in the Boat - Daniel James Brown

The Hiding Place - Corrie Ten Boom

Through Gates of Splendor - Elisabeth Elliot

BIBLE STORIES //

A Life of Integrity:

Daniel -- Daniel Chapter 6

Daniel is famous for his time in the lion's den, but what happened before he was thrown into the den of lions is a great lesson in integrity. Integrity will be tested, and integrity will cost. But a life of integrity will be blessed by God and will lead to favor with people.

Living with Humility:

Mary -- Luke 1:26-38, Isaiah 66:2

Mary was more surprised than anyone to be chosen to be the Mother of the Savior of the world. Her response to the news was full of humility, and that pleased the Lord. Humility is not just not thinking higher of yourself than you should; it is not thinking of yourself at all.

A Life of Bravery:

Esther – The book of Esther

Esther was living in exile when she was plucked out of anonymity to the position of queen...in a kingdom ruled by a pagan King. When she realized that her position gave her the opportunity to take a great risk with the hope of saving literally all of the Jews in the Kingdom, she chose the brave step and did what she needed to do. Brave women and men of the Bible and history of paved the way for the peace and freedoms we all know, and we should strive to be brave for good as well.

An Honest Life:

Samuel - 1 Samuel 3, 1 Samuel 12

In life it is much easier to flatter people...say what people want to hear than it is to speak the truth. Samuel spoke the truth no matter what; he was God's mouthpiece. When God spoke, Samuel passed it on plainly, even if it meant he would suffer for it. In life it is often easier to lie, and sometimes no one will ever find out. But, being known as a person who always speaks the truth is one important part of having excellent character.



Being Loyal:

Ruth - Ruth 1. (Chapters 1-4 are all worth reading!)

Ruth exemplified loyalty to her mother-in-law, which may have not seemed like the biggest deal in the world. However, the consequence to her choice to remain loyal began a series of events that changed the history of the world. In fact, when you look at the genealogy of Jesus, there are four women mentioned in the family tree: Ruth is one of them. God promises to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5) and when we are loyal to God and others we show great character.

Fearing God//Being Respectful:

David – 1 Samuel 24 (*Psalm 78:72)

David's life is full of adventure, and a full study of his life is a worthwhile endeavor. (See 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles to get started.) After defeating the giant, Goliath, David was made aware that he would one day be King. However, until that day, he experienced a complicated relationship with the current King, Saul, who was often bent on destroying David's life. Yet David showed great restraint and a heart of respect for God's appointed leaders and ultimately God's sovereignty. God's hand was on David's life and we can all be inspired by his choice to fear God and show respect at all costs.

Confidence (in God's plan) and faithfulness:

Joseph - Genesis 37-50

Joseph's life story is chapter after chapter of character lessons. Rejected and sold into slavery by his own brothers was only the beginning. Joseph's wild story gave him every excuse to be full of bitterness, unforgiveness, regret, and hopelessness. Yet, challenge after challenge only proves that Joseph was a man of character, and the end of the story is well worth the journey to get there. Joseph was confident that living a character-rich life was the right call, no matter what. Joseph's story should inspire anyone who is unsure.